

THE POCAHONTAS TIMES

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CALVIN W. PRICE, Editor.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 1929

On the night of the 14th day of April, 1865, the Confederate army having fallen to pieces by reason of the surrender at Appomattox, two young West Virginia rebel soldiers were on their way back to the mountains. For shelter that night they had crawled under a railroad station. It was about twenty miles from the city of Washington. One of the boys was a telegraph operator. During the night he heard the clicking of the telegraph instruments in the room over him. All at once he clutched his companion's arm and said that Lincoln had been shot and killed and that meant trouble for the South. That morning the soldiers were raking the country. The boys got away from there and traveled all night and got home without further alarm.

But the instant diagnosis of the young soldier was correct. It was a day full of tribulation for the South. In vain they argued that the assassin was not a Southern man. John Wilkes Booth was the son of an English actor. The elder was James Brutus Booth, a famous English tragedian, noted especially for his rendition of the character Richard III in Shakespeare. The father had a large American following and made regular trips to this country, and died here in 1822, while returning from a trip to California. He had trained his son John Wilkes Booth and the younger had already become famous for dark and gloomy roles such as Hamlet.

During the Civil War the home of the family was in Baltimore. It is positively stated that Booth's sympathies were for the South, but if they were they could not have been very violent for he was free to come and go and practise his profession in the North. It does not appear that he made public such sentiments to any considerable degree. It is to be regretted that he was free to come and go in the city of Washington and many believe that he found it easy as a great artist to talk with President Lincoln. There is a good deal of evidence that just before the close of the war that he was making strenuous efforts to save the life of Captain John Yates Beall, Jr., of Jefferson County, who was being held in New York February 24, 1865, following a court martial on charges that he was a pirate and a spy. A careful reading of the documentary evidence indicates that he was a good friend of the famous captain and knew of the dreadful danger that confronted him. Certainly those of the Confederate high officials knew it, though Jefferson Davis mourned for him after his death as though he was a son, and the Secretary of the Navy and the Commissioner of Exchange of Prisoners, Robert Todd, did not know of Beall's arrest until after he was dead, though he had been held a close prisoner for more than two months prior to his execution.

It is from this reasoning that I have come to believe that his immediate family did not know of his peril until it was too late, for the information would have been immediately conveyed to the Confederate government, and the whole Southland would have rung with the news of the great hero of the Civil War.

It is known for certain that at one time in the Civil War that his widow made several long and expensive trips to Washington to see President Lincoln and had exerted herself to the uttermost. But it is remembered that Beall was in irons charged with piracy in November, 1863, and that he had been refused the status of a prisoner of war, that after a time the President intervened in his behalf, by having his irons removed and his prison changed.

That a little later his good friend Robert Todd succeeded in getting him exchanged and his rank was restored and he continued to serve the South as a Master in the Navy of the C. S. A. I know that this will not coincide with the impression of some of the learned and reliable historians of Jefferson County. But what can you do? When all the high officials of the South and all Virginia were ignorant of the fact, it is not to be presumed that Beall's friends in Virginia could have known of his incarceration in New York.

If then anyone interposed and petitioned the Federal authorities for mercy it was Booth, and he could not have been in touch with the Southerners or the news would have come through him.

There was a reprieve for Beall from the 18th to the 24th day of February, 1864, and this makes it seem that there was some agency at work in his behalf, and as I said before it must have been from some source north of the line, for the Confederate authorities would have known about the case before it was too late to act.

Beall himself thought that Richmond must know of his plight for he wrote on February 21 to his friend, Colonel Ould, that he must have seen an account of his sentence and doom in the New York newspapers. This letter was received on the 27th three days after the death of the correspondent, and both Ould and the Secretary of the Navy, and the President of the C. S. A., Jefferson Davis, asserted most solemnly that no information of the case of Beall was brought to the department, either verbal or written, prior to the execution.

So far as is known, Booth had no other grudge or complaint against the Federal government except the death of his friend and companion, and this was what caused him to form the conspiracy to murder the President, Seward, and Stanton, the same night. The Editor of the Christian Observer published an account from his own personal knowledge after the war, giving this as the cause of the tragedy.

I have investigated a very interesting theory as to the reason of Beall's presence in the State of New York at

the time he was captured. According to that romance one of Beall's sisters had a love affair with a Federal officer, the handsome General Custer, for choice, and that it was to find and kill this officer that was the mission of Beall in the North. I see no occasion for bringing any of the women folk into this tragedy. It was no private vengeance that took Beall into the hostile territory, but as I well explain as we go along, he went there on as bold and dangerous an errand as ever was undertaken by any man, and that it was one of the last desperate efforts of Jefferson Davis to win the war. As I stood beside the grave of John Yates Beall, where he sleeps secure in the affection of his countrymen, I found the answer, in the sentence that he asked to have engraved upon his monument: "Died in the service and defense of his country."

Beall came from a fine family. His father, George Beall, died in 1855, leaving a large landed estate consisting of fertile farms in the vicinity of Charles Town, Jefferson County. He left behind him his widow, Janet Yates Beall, a splendid woman and four daughters and three sons. They belonged to the aristocracy and were refined and cultivated people. The name of Yates occurs frequently in the family, this being the maiden name of Mrs. Beall. The Yates family came here from England and are a branch of the noble name of Agionby. John Agionby was chaplain to Queen Elizabeth, and one of the translators of King John Bible. One of the Yates' from Jefferson County returned to take the title and name of the estates of the family.

As a boy John Yates Beall was sent to school at Alexandria where he became acquainted with another boy student, John Wilkes Booth. The friendship sprang up between the boys that was as strong as death. And they kept in touch with each other until the end. From their childhood these attachments between men have been recognized and most men have had experience along this line.

There is nothing better established than that Booth was in Charleston and was a great favorite with the people there. When John Brown occupied Harpers Ferry and was taken seriously, soldiers were sent there from Richmond, some of them the company of the county in which Beall was enrolled were under arms and acting. When the Richmond forces arrived on the train with the governor, there in life and very hand some, was John Wilkes Booth in the uniform of a Virginia soldier. There can be no question about this. No body to this day can explain why a Baltimore boy should have appeared there with the Virginia troops, but there he was, and it was not long until he had found his old college chum, a member of the Charleston Guards, and Booth was thereafter remembered for his gallant among the girls and for his ability to act Shakespearean parts. Then as now there were class school scholars in that town. One man also afterwards became famous on the stage himself, "Sunshine Hawks" recalled often that Booth claimed to have the only true and plausible interpretation of the character, Hamlet. Booth who must have been in his early twenties at that time may have been in Richmond on the stage, or visiting, but anyway he took part in the John Brown war.

It is of course possible that Beall and Booth were cousins for the Yates family were close in touch with their English cousins and Booth was an Englishman.

It will be remembered that the last twelve months of the war, or say from May 1, 1864 to April 9, 1865, produced many desperate men in the C. S. A. There never was a war or a combination of circumstances where individual courage and resource shone to such an extent as in closing days of the war of the rebellion. I think that is one reason that the North cherishes the memories of the South and gives to the Southerners such unstinted friendship and admiration.

It occurred to Jefferson Davis that some use could be made of the Great Lakes through which an international boundary line is laid down on the maps, with one shore belonging to Canada, and the other, shore to the United States. It may have been a forlorn hope, but he picked out some of the bravest and most discreet men and sent them into Canada to pry upon the shipping on the lakes, and they succeeded in making themselves felt in the somewhat brief campaign of the fall of 1864.

Beall as a master of a sloop in the Chesapeake Bay had many prizes to his credit. He would capture boats laden with army supplies and he was a terror to the shipping. They captured him in November, 1863, and suggested first that they would try him before a jury in Accomac County on a charge of piracy, but while they were debating the question, powerful forces were at work and effected his exchange.

His next commission was to go to Canada and attack the United States from that side. It is not known exactly when he arrived there but he had an important part in a naval exploit that came to the head on September 19, 1864. There was an important military prison on Johnson Island, on the shores of the State of

Ohio. The plan was to enlist the aid of some Southern sympathizers or as they were sometimes lovingly called, copperheads, and to assemble all of the rebel soldiers that could be rounded up on short notice and make a general prison delivery. Word was gotten to the prisoners to be ready to march out on the night of September 19. Beall was to capture a couple of steamboats to ferry the escaped prisoners across the lake.

The secret service of the Federal government became aware of the plot on the early morning of the 19th. They were a little late in finding it out but they acted in time to prevent the delivery. The first intimation was when about seventy passengers on a train got down in a body in the outskirts of Sandusky. Instead of riding on into the regular station.

A great body of troops closed in on this devoted band and placed them all under arrest. Beall and about thirty men boarded the steamer Philo Parsons from ports of call on the Canadian side and after the boat was well out on Lake Erie, these men rose up with pistols and hand axes and took over the management of the ship. Presently they came close to the Island Queen, another boat and they captured her, and afterwards she sank her. The plans on the Ohio shore having failed, the freebooters escaped into Canada and scattered.

The intelligence department got busy and the friendly government in Canada gave most fervent assurance that they would hunt over to the United States. There could not be more warmth in their offers of co-operation. It reminds of the present excellent arrangement by which whiskey is prevented from coming into this country. The lakes are like we used to say about the Ohio River, dry on one side and wet on the other. Beall probably never got back to live over the experience of capturing two rich steam boats with his cronies in the Old Dominion. But it can be said that the exploit lost nothing in the telling. In these piping days of peace it is easy to make a hero out of such things as breaking sport records but in those days when the iron had entered into the hearts of the Southern people, they turned to such men as Beall, Mosby, and Rosser who were accomplishing impossibilities.

When Beall was captured for the last time, he had the ignominy to be tapped on the shoulder by the town marshal. At a railroad depot at the place called Suspension Bridge, where there is a span across the Niagara River, on the international line, Beall was arrested, in sight of safety on the Canadian shore.

This was on the 16th day of December, 1864. He was taken to New York City after he had been identified by persons who had been on the boat, Philo Parsons. At that time there was a good deal of evidence that a plot had been made to burn New York City, and affairs were only tolerable for a Confederate prisoner at that place. Dix was in command of that district. The first request that Beall made was that a fellow prisoner, Roger A. Pryor, be allowed to appear for him before the court martial. Pryor was a brilliant lawyer, and had served in Congress as a young man before the war. I myself have sat and talked to the old General at a time and did not have sense enough to ask him about the Civil War. He never referred to it. Possibly that is the reason. He had gone North and been admitted to the Republican party, and elected to a judgeship. But as a shrewd and adroit politician he had about as much to do with the secession of Virginia as any man living. I refer to the time that we Virginia seceded on advice of counsel and lost the case.

The question of whether a fellow prisoner could defend the accused before the court-martial seems to have

given the Federal authorities a good deal of food for thought. Finally the decision came from Washington that under no circumstances could a prisoner appear as counsel before a court-martial. They furnished him with one of the most eminent trial lawyers of his time, James T. Brady, of New York City, the leader of what were known as the War Democrats.

On February 10th, 1865, Beall was arraigned for trial almost two months after his arrest. The charges consist of six for treason and three for acting as a spy. The treason charges were for three overt acts, the capture and sinking of the Island Queen, and placing obstructions in front of a railroad train in New York December 15, 1865, with the purpose of destroying the lives of persons travelling by train. Then three for being present when such things occurred, and three more for acting as a spy on the three occasions. Gen. Warren was president of the commission. The trial lasted one day and the prisoner was found guilty on each of the nine charges which being construed to be all in violation of the law of war carried the death penalty.

He was sentenced to be hanged on the 18th of February at such place as the general in command of the department of the East might determine. The execution took place on Governor's Island in the harbor of New York.

It is beyond all doubt that Beall's imprisonment, trial, and execution though lasting over a period of two months and more, was unknown in the South. He was away with a number of other captains courageous whom death could not daunt to capture the Great Lakes and make a diversion in favor of the South.

The first knowledge was the letter received by Ould and that morning, February 27, 1865, the news first appeared in the Richmond papers and the whole C. S. A. went wild with indignation. The legislature of Virginia passed a joint resolution calling for retaliation which even agitated U. S. Grant. The hero of the war. The gallant gentleman. The brave soldier. The lovable man was no more. That convinces me that all efforts to save him were exerted above the line. The reprieve of six days shows some force at work. Tradition has it that Booth had made a great effort to save his friend, and when he failed he conspired to kill the President, Seward, and Stanton, to avenge the act. As usual you find me accepting tradition as being the truth in the abstract, though many facts can be marshalled by the active advocates against it. That is one trouble about history is that it has too many facts and not enough truth. And my quarrel with the historians is all occasioned by my refusal to subscribe to all of their fables.

Until I am better informed, it is my opinion that Booth's murderous mood was induced by the anger occasioned by the execution of Captain John Yates Beall, of Jefferson County. For Beall, let us quote: "Courage, an independent spark from heaven's bright throne, by which the soul stands raised, triumphant, and alone. Courage, the mighty attribute of powers above, by which those great in war are great in love."

The wonder remains. That the first tragic event of the Civil War, the death of John Brown, on the scaffold, and its last and greatest horror, the assassination of the Man of the Ages, should have been so closely linked with Jefferson County.

Sheep Lost
Shropshire buck, ewe and eight lambs strayed from my place near Minnehaha Springs, marked with ear tags H. R. W., heart shaped clip in ear, some with "L. T." on sides. Please notify H. R. Wylle, Minnehaha Springs, W. Va.

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All persons are notified not to hunt or otherwise trespass on the lands of the undersigned.
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1500 pounds good quality honey, section comb honey, put up in sanitary paper cartons, 25c per lb in lots of 50 lbs or over 20c per lb at farm. Bring containers with you. Will not ship honey at this low price.
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Buckeye, W. Va.

No Trespassing
All persons are notified not to trespass on the lands of the undersigned, especially by hunting and cutting and hauling away wood. Do not ask for permission as it will be refused.
S. I. Barlow
Huntersville, W. Va.

Administratrix Notice
If anyone has a bill or account against the estate of Joe Kelley, deceased, please present the same to me at once.
Given under my hand this 9th day of October, 1929.
Allie Kelley, Administratrix

Heverland Giant Bronze
Turkeys, choice breeding stock for sale during November and December. Toms and hens unrelated. Write us your wants and you will receive full description and price.
R. H. Crummett
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Commissioner's Notice
J. H. Buzzard and the Bank of Marlinton, Plaintiffs
vs.
W. D. Burgess et al.
To whom it may concern:
Take notice that pursuant to a decretal order of the Circuit Court of Pocahontas County, West Virginia, entered on the 7th day of October, 1929, in the above entitled cause, the undersigned Commissioner will on

Friday, November 15, 1929, at his office in the town of Marlinton, proceed to take, state and report to Court the following matters of account, to-wit:

1. What lands are owned by W. D. Burgess, their value and location, together with their rental value.
2. The liens on said lands with their amounts and respective priorities.
3. Any other matter deemed pertinent to the Commissioner or required by any party in interest.
At which time and place you may attend.
ADOLPH E. COOPER, Commissioner.

J. H. Buzzard and the Bank of Marlinton, Plaintiffs
vs.
W. D. Burgess et al.
To all persons holding liens by judgment or otherwise on the real estate, or any part thereof, of W. D. Burgess:
In pursuance of a decree of the Circuit Court of Pocahontas County, made in a cause therein pending, to subject the real estate of the said W. D. Burgess to the satisfaction of the liens thereon, you are hereby required to present all claims held by you and each of you against the said W. D. Burgess, which are liens on his real estate, or any part of it, for adjudication to me, at my office in the town of Marlinton, West Virginia, on or before the 15th day of November, 1929.
Given under my hand this 15th day of October, 1929.
Adolph E. Cooper, Commissioner

Administrator's Notice
Notice is hereby given to all persons knowing themselves indebted to the estate of B. F. Slayton to make prompt settlement with the undersigned administrator; and all persons holding claims against the said estate are requested to present the same for payment with legal proof attached.
Given under my hand this 8th day of October, 1929.
A. P. Edgar, Administrator of the estate of B. F. Slayton, deceased.

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Just a few of those beautiful Barred Rock Aristocrats from trap tested stock: sired by a son of Prince Manybar IX; guaranteed to improve any flock in laying qualities and as show birds; some \$3.00, balance \$4.00.
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Marlinton, W. Va.

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Huntersville, W. Va.

No Trespassing
All persons are notified not to trespass on the lands of the undersigned especially by hunting.
U. H. Hannah
J. M. Hannah
Ham Burns
Sept. 29, 1929

NOTICE TO HUNTERS
During the school year W. E. Blackhurst, Taxidermist will be located at Glenville, W. Va. Send your trophies for correct mounting.

SICK AT HIS STOMACH

"I WAS suffering from stomach trouble in 1917," says Mr. C. K. Nelson, a railroad engineer living near Pulaski, Va. "I had a tightness in my chest, a shortness of breath. There seemed to be a heavy weight in the pit of my stomach, and quite a bit of nausea, yet I couldn't vomit. I tried different remedies, yet I suffered on just the same. When in West Virginia on a work train, I was in such a condition that I just gave up and came home. I couldn't stand to work, in my condition. Some one told me about Black Draught. I started taking it in small doses after meals. It helped me, and I went back to work."

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